A

SERMON

ON

Salvation by Faith.

THE TENTH EDITION.

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EPHESIANS ii. 8.

By Grace ye are ſaved, thro' Faith.

1. ALL the bleſſings which God hath beſtowed upon man are of his mere grace, bounty, or favour: his free undeſerved favour, favour altogether undeſerved; man having no claim to the leaſt of his mercies. It was free grace that *formed man out of the duſt of the ground and breathed into him a living ſoul*, and ſtamped on that ſoul the image of God, and *put all things under his feet.* The ſame grace continues to us, at this day, life, breath, and all things. For there is nothing we are, or have, or do, which can deſerve the leaſt thing at God's hand. *All our works, thou, O God, haſt wrought in us.* Theſe, therefore, are ſo many more inſtances of free mercy: and whatever righteouſneſs may be found in man, this alſo, is the gift of God.

2. Wherewithal then ſhall a ſinful man atone for any of the leaſt of his ſins? With his own works? No, Were they ever ſo many or holy, they are not his own but God's. But indeed they are all unholy and ſinful themſelves, ſo that every one of them needs a freſh atonement. Only corrupt fruit grows on a corrupt tree. And his heart is altogether corrupt and abominable; being *come ſhort of the glory of God*, the glorious righteouſneſs at firſt impreſt on his ſoul, after the image of his creator. Therefore having nothing, neither righteouſneſs nor works to plead, his *mouth is utterly ſtopped before God.*

3. If then ſinful man find favour with God, it is *grace upon grace.* If God vouchſafe ſtill to pour freſh bleſſings upon us, yea, the greateſt of all bleſſings, *ſalvation*; what can we ſay to theſe things, but *thanks be unto God for his unſpeakable Gift!* And thus it is. Herein

Herein *God commendeth his love towards us, in that while we were yet ſinners, Chriſt died* to ſave us. *By grace then are ye ſaved through faith.* Grace is the ſource, Faith the condition of ſalvation.

Now, that we fall not ſhort of the grace of God, it concerns us carefully to enquire,

I. What faith it is through which we are ſaved?
II. What is the ſalvation which is through faith?
III. How we may anſwer ſome objections.

I. What faith it is through which we are ſaved?

1. And firſt, It is not barely the faith of an Heathen. Now God requireth of an Heathen to believe, *That God is; that he is a rewarder of them that diligently ſeek him:* and that he is to be ſought by *glorifying him as God, by giving him thanks* for all things, and by a careful practice of moral virtue, of juſtice, mercy and truth, toward their fellow creatures. A *Greek* or *Roman* therefore, yea, a *Scythian* or *Indian*, was without excuſe if he did not believe thus much, the being and attributes of God, a future ſtate of reward and puniſhment, and the obligatory nature of moral virtue. For this is barely the faith of a Heathen.

2. Nor, *2dly*, Is it the faith of a Devil, though this goes much farther than that of a Heathen. For the Devil believes, not only, that there is a wiſe and powerful God, gracious to reward, and juſt to puniſh; but alſo, that Jeſus is the Son of God, the Chriſt, the Saviour of the world. So we find him declaring in expreſs terms, *Luke* iv. 34. *I know thee, who thou art, the holy one of God.* Nor can we doubt but that unhappy ſpirit believes all the words, which came out of the mouth of the holy one: yea, and whatſoever elſe was written by thoſe holy men of old; of two of whom he was compelled to give that glorious teſtimony, *Theſe men are the ſervants of the moſt high God, who ſhew unto you the way of Salvation.* Thus much then the great enemy of God and man believes, and trembles in believing, that *God was made manifeſt in the fleſh*, That he will *tread all enemies under his feet*, and that *all ſcripture was given by Inſpiration of God.* Thus far goeth the faith of a Devil.

3. *Thirdly*, The faith thro' which we are ſaved, in that ſenſe of the word which will be hereafter explained, is not barely that which the Apoſtles themſelves had while Chriſt was yet upon earth: tho' they ſo believed on him then, as to *leave all and follow him.* Although they had then power to work miracles, to *heal all manner of ſickneſs, and all manner of diſeaſe*; yea, they had then *power and authority over all Devils:* And which is beyond all this, they were ſent by their maſter to *preach the kingdom of God:* Yet after their return from doing all theſe mighty works, their Lord himſelf terms them *A faithleſs generation.*

4. What faith is it then through which we are ſaved? It may be anſwered, firſt in general, It is a faith in Chriſt; Chriſt, and God through Chriſt, are the proper objects of it. Herein therefore it is ſufficiently, abſolutely diſtinguiſhed from the faith of either antient or modern Heathens. And from the faith of a Devil, it is fully diſtinguiſhed by this, it is not barely a ſpeculative, rational thing, a cold, a lifeleſs aſſent, a train of ideas in the head; but alſo a diſpoſition of the heart. For thus ſaith the ſcripture, *With the heart man believeth unto righteouſneſs.* And, *If thou ſhalt confeſs with thy mouth the Lord Jeſus, and ſhalt believe with thy* heart, *that God hath raiſed him from the dead, thou ſhalt be ſaved.*

5. And herein does it differ from that faith which the Apoſtles themſelves had while our Lord was on earth, that it acknowledges the neceſſity and merit of his death, and the power of his reſurrection. It acknowledges his death, as the only ſufficient means of redeeming man from death eternal; and his reſurrection as the reſtoration of us all to life and immortality: Inaſmuch *as he was delivered for our ſins, and roſe again for our juſtification.* Chriſtian faith is then not only an aſſent to the whole goſpel of Chriſt, but alſo a full reliance on the Blood of Chriſt, a truſt in the merits of his life, death, and reſurrection; a recumbency upon him as our atonement and our life; as *given for us*, and *living in us.* It is a ſure confidence which a man hath in God, that through the merits of Chriſt *his* ſins are forgiven, and *he* reconciled to the favour of God; and in conſequence

quence hereof, a closing with him, and cleaving to him, as *our wisdom*, *righteousness*, *sanctification*, *redemption*, or in one word, *our salvation*.

II. What salvation it is, which is through this faith, is the second thing to be considered.

1. And first, Whatsoever else it imply, it is a present salvation. It is something attainable, yea, actually attained on earth, by those who are partakers of this faith. For thus saith the apostle to the believers at *Ephesus*, and in them to the believers of all ages, not ye shall be (though that also is true) but *ye* are *saved through faith*.

2. *Ye are saved* (to comprise all in one word) from sin. This is the salvation foretold by the angel, before God brought his first-begotten into the world, *Thou shalt call his name Jesus, for he shall save his people from their sins*. And neither here, nor in other parts of holy writ, is there limitation or restrict. All his people, or as it is elsewhere expresst, all that believe in him, he will save from all their sins; from original and actual, past and present sin, of the flesh and of the spirit. Through faith that is in him, they are saved both from the guilt and from the power of it.

3. First, from the guilt of all past sin. For whereas *all the world is guilty before God!* insomuch that should he *be extreme to mark what is done amiss, there is none that could abide it*: and whereas *by the law is only the knowledge of sin*, but no deliverance from it; so that *by fulfilling the deeds of the law, no flesh can be justified in his sight: Now the righteousness of God, which is by faith of Jesus Christ, is manifested unto all that believe*. Now *they are justified freely by his grace, thro' the redemption that is in Jesus Christ. Him God hath set forth to be a propitiation thro' faith in his blood; to declare his righteousness for* (or by) *remission of sins that are past*. Now hath *Christ taken away the curse of the law, being made a curse for us*. He hath *blotted out the hand-writing that was against us, taking it out of the way, nailing it to the cross. There is therefore no condemnation now*, to them which believe in Christ Jesus.

4. And being saved from guilt, they are saved from

fear. Not indeed from a filial fear of offending; but from all ſervile fear, from that *fear which hath torment*, from fear of puniſhment, from fear of the wrath of God; whom they now no longer regard as a ſevere maſter, but as an indulgent father: *They have not received again the ſpirit of bondage; but the ſpirit of adoption, whereby they cry Abba Father: The ſpirit itſelf alſo bearing witneſs with their ſpirit that they are the children of God.* They are alſo ſaved from the fear, though not from the poſſibility, of falling away from the grace of God, and coming ſhort of the great and precious promiſes: they are *ſealed with the holy ſpirit of promiſe, which is the earneſt of their inheritance.* (Eph. i. 13.) Thus have they *peace with God through our Lord Jeſus Chriſt. They rejoice in hope of the glory of God. And the love of God is ſhed abroad in their hearts, through the* Holy Ghoſt, *which is given unto them.* And hereby they are *perſuaded* (tho' perhaps not at all times, nor with the ſame fulneſs of perſuaſion) *that neither death nor life, nor things preſent nor things to come, nor heighth nor depth, nor any other creature, ſhall be able to ſeparate them from the love of* God, *which is in* Chriſt Jeſus *our Lord.*

5. Again, thro' this faith they are ſaved from the power of ſin, as well as from the guilt of it. Indeed *the infection of nature doth remain for a time, which hath in itſelf the nature of ſin.* But this notwithſtanding, the Apoſtle declares, *Ye know that he was manifeſted to take away our ſins. And in him is no ſin. Whoſoever abideth in him ſinneth not.* (1 John iii. 5, &c.) Again, *Little Children, let no man deceive you.——He that committeth ſin, is of the Devil.——Whoſoever believeth is born of* God.——*And whoſoever is born of* God *doth not commit ſin, for his ſeed remaineth in him: and he cannot ſin, becauſe he is born of* God: Once more, *We know that whoſoever is born of* God *ſinneth not; but he that is begotten of* God *keepeth himſelf, and that wicked one toucheth him not.* Chap. v. 18.

6. He that is by faith born of God, ſinneth not, 1. By any habitual ſin: For all habitual ſin, is ſin reigning. But ſin cannot reign in any that believeth. Nor

Nor, 2. By any wilful ſin, for his Will, while he abideth in the faith, is utterly ſet againſt all ſin, and abhorreth it as deadly poiſon. Nor 3. By any ſinful deſire; for he continually deſireth the holy and perfect will of God; and any tendency to an unholy deſire he by the grace of God ſtifleth in the birth. Nor 4. Doth he ſin by infirmities, whether in act, word, or thought. For his infirmities have no concurrence of his will; and without this they are not properly ſins. Thus, *He that is born of God* hath ſin in him, but *doth not commit ſin.* And though he cannot ſay, *he hath not ſinned*, yet now *he ſinneth not.*

7. This then is the ſalvation which is through faith, even in the preſent world. A ſalvation from ſin, and the conſequences of ſin, both often expreſt in the word *juſtification:* which taken in the largeſt ſenſe implies, a deliverance from guilt and puniſhment, by the atonement of Chriſt actually applied to the ſoul of the ſinner, now believing on him, and a deliverance from the whole body of ſin, through Chriſt *formed in his heart.* So that he who is thus juſtified or ſaved by faith, is indeed *born again.* He is *born again of the Spirit* unto a new *life, which is hid with Chriſt in* God. *He is a new creature: Old things are paſſed away: All things in him are become new.* And as a *new-born babe, he gladly receives* (Αδολον) *the ſincere milk of the word, and grows thereby; going on in the might of the Lord his* God, *from faith to faith, from grace to grace, until at length he come unto a perfect man, unto the meaſure of the ſtature of the fulneſs of Chriſt.*

III. The firſt uſual objection to this is,

1. That to preach ſalvation, or juſtification by faith only, is to preach againſt holineſs and good works. To which a ſhort anſwer might be given: It would be ſo if we ſpake as ſome do, of a faith which was ſeparate from theſe. But we ſpeak of a faith which is not ſo, but neceſſarily productive of all good works and all holineſs.

2. But it may be of uſe to conſider it more at large: Eſpecially ſince it is no new objection, but as old as St. *Paul*'s time; for even then it was aſked, *Do we*

not

not make void the law thro' faith? We anſwer, firſt, all who preach not faith, do manifeſtly make void the law; either directly and groſly, by limitations and comments, that eat out all the ſpirit of the text: Or indirectly, by not pointing out the only means whereby it is poſſible to perform it. Whereas, ſecondly, *We eſtabliſh the law*; both by ſhewing its full extent, and ſpiritual meaning; and by calling all to that living way, whereby *the righteouſneſs of the law may be fulfilled in them.* Theſe, while they truſt in the blood of Chriſt alone, uſe all the ordinances which he hath appointed, do all the *good works which he had before prepared that they ſhould walk therein*, and enjoy and manifeſt all holy and heavenly tempers, even the ſame *mind that was in Chriſt Jeſus our Lord.*

3. But does not preaching this faith lead men into pride? We anſwer, accidentally it may. Therefore ought every believer to be earneſtly cautioned (in the words of the great Apoſtle) *Becauſe of unbelief, the firſt branches were broken off, and thou ſtandeſt by faith; Be not high-minded, but fear. If God ſpared not the natural branches, take heed leſt he ſpare not thee. Behold therefore the goodneſs and ſeverity of God! On them which fell, ſeverity: But towards thee, goodneſs, If thou continue in his goodneſs; otherwiſe ſhalt thou be cut off.* And while he continues therein, he will remember thoſe words of St. *Paul*, foreſeeing and anſwering this very objection (Rom. iii. 27.) *Where is boaſting then? It is excluded. By what law? Of works? Nay, but by the law of faith.* If a man were juſtified by his works, he would have whereof to glory. But there is no glorying for him *that worketh not, but believeth on him that juſtifieth the ungodly.* (Rom. iv.) To the ſame effect are the words both preceding and following the Text, (Eph. ii. 4, &c.) *God who is rich in mercy—even when we were dead in ſins, hath quickened us together with Chriſt (by Grace ye are ſaved)——that he might ſhew the exceeding riches of his grace, in his kindneſs towards us through Chriſt Jeſus. For by grace are ye ſaved, through faith: and that not of yourſelves.* Of yourſelves cometh neither your faith

nor

nor your ſalvation. *It is the Gift of God*; the free, undeſerved gift; the faith through which ye are ſaved, as well as the ſalvation, which he of his own good pleaſure, his mere favour, annexes thereto. That ye believe, is one inſtance of his grace; that believing ye are ſaved, another. *Not of works, leſt any man ſhould boaſt.* For all our works, all our righteouſneſs, which were before our believing, merited nothing of God but condemnation. So far were they from deſerving faith; which therefore, whenever given, is not *of works.* Neither is ſalvation of the works we do when we believe. For *it is* then God *that worketh in us.* And therefore, that he giveth us a reward for what he himſelf worketh, only commendeth the riches of his mercy, but leaveth us nothing whereof to glory.

4 However, may not the ſpeaking thus of the mercy of God, as ſaving or juſtifying freely by faith only, encourage men in ſin? Indeed it may and will; many *will continue in ſin that grace may abound.* But their blood is upon their own head. The goodneſs of God ought to lead them to repentance; and ſo it will thoſe who are ſincere of heart. When they know there is yet forgiveneſs with him, they will cry aloud that he would blot out their ſins alſo, thro' faith which is in Jeſus. And if they earneſtly cry and faint not, if they ſeek him in all the means he hath appointed, if they refuſe to be comforted till he come, *he will come and will not tarry.* And he can do much work in a ſhort time. Many are the examples in the Acts of the Apoſtles, of God ſhedding abroad this faith in men's hearts, even like lightning falling from heaven. So in the ſame hour that Paul and Silas began to preach the Jailor *repented, believed, and was baptized:* As were three thouſand by St. Peter, on the day of Pentecoſt, who all repented and believed at his firſt preaching. And bleſſed be God, there are now many living proofs, that he is ſtill *mighty to ſave.*

5. Yet to the ſame truth, placed in another view a quite contrary objection is made: "If a man cannot "be ſaved by all that he can do, this will drive men "to deſpair." True, to deſpair of being ſaved by their

their own works, their own merits or righteouſneſs. And ſo it ought, for none can truſt in the merits of Chriſt, till he has utterly renounced his own. He that *goeth about to eſtabliſh his own righteouſneſs*, cannot receive the righteouſneſs of God. The righteouſneſs which is of faith cannot be given him, while he truſteth in that which is of the law.

6. But this, it is ſaid, is an uncomfortable doctrine. The Devil ſpoke like himſelf, that is, without either truth or ſhame, when he dared to ſuggeſt to men that it is ſuch. 'Tis the only comfortable one, 'tis *very full of comfort*, to all ſelf-deſtroyed, ſelf-condemned ſinners. That *whoſoever believeth on him ſhall not be aſhamed*: That *the ſame Lord over all, is rich unto all who call upon him*. Here is comfort, high as heaven, ſtronger than death! What! Mercy for all? For Zaccheus, a publick robber? For Mary Magdalene, a common harlot? Methinks I hear one ſay, Then I, even I, may hope for mercy! And ſo thou may'ſt thou afflicted one, whom none hath comforted! God will not caſt out thy prayer. Nay, perhaps he may ſay the next hour, *Be of good cheer, thy ſins are forgiven thee*; ſo forgiven that they ſhall reign over thee no more; yea, and that *the Holy Spirit ſhall bear witneſs with thy ſpirit, that thou art a child of God*. O glad tidings! tidings of great joy, which are ſent unto all people. *Ho every one that thirſteth, come ye to the waters: Come ye and buy without money, and without price*. Whatſoever your ſins be, *tho' red like crimſon*, tho' *more than the hairs of your head: return ye unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon you; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon*.

7. When no more objections occur, then we are ſimply told, That juſtification by faith only, ought not to be preached as the firſt doctrine, or at leaſt not to be preached to All. But what ſaith the Holy Ghoſt? *Other foundation can no man lay, than that which is laid, even Jeſus Chriſt*. So then, *That whoſoever believeth on him ſhall be ſaved*, is and muſt be the foundation of all our preaching; that is, muſt be preached firſt. "Well, but not to all!" To whom then are we not to preach it? Whom ſhall we except? The poor? Nay, they have

have a peculiar right to have the goſpel preached unto them. The unlearned? No. God hath revealed theſe things unto unlearned and ignorant men from the beginning. The young? By no means. *Suffer theſe* in any wiſe, *to come unto Chriſt and forbid them not.* The ſinners? Leaſt of all. *He came not to call the righteous, but ſinners to repentance.* Why then, if any, we are to except the rich, the learned, the reputable, the moral men. And tis true, they too often except themſelves from hearing; yet we muſt ſpeak the words of our Lord. For thus the tenor of our commiſſion runs, *Go and preach the Goſpel to every creature.* If any man wreſt it, or any part of it to his own deſtruction, he muſt bear his own burthen. But ſtill, *as the Lord liveth, whatſoever the Lord ſaith unto us, That we will ſpeak.*

8. At this time more eſpecially will we ſpeak, that *By grace are ye ſaved thro' faith:* Becauſe never was the maintaining this doctrine more ſeaſonable than it is at this day. Nothing but this can effectually prevent the increaſe of the *Romiſh* deluſion among us. 'Tis endleſs to attack one by one, all the errors of that apoſtate Church. But ſalvation by faith ſtrikes at the root, and all fall at once where this is eſtabliſhed. It was this doctrine (which our church juſtly calls *the ſtrong Rock and foundation of the Chriſtian Religion*) that firſt drove Popery out of theſe kingdoms, and tis this alone can keep it out. Nothing but this can give a check to that immorality, which hath *overſpread our land as a flood.* Can you empty the great deep, drop by drop? Then you may reform us by diſſuaſives from particular vices. But let the *righteouſneſs which is of* God *by faith* be brought in, and ſo ſhall its proud waves be ſtayed. Nothing but this can ſtop the mouths of thoſe, who *glory in their ſhame, and openly deny the Lord that bought them.* They can talk as ſublimely of the law, as he that hath it written by God in his heart. To hear them ſpeak on this head, might incline one to think, they were not far from the kingdom of God. But take them out of the law into the goſpel: begin with the

the righteouſneſs of faith, *with* Chriſt *the end of the law to every one that believeth:* And thoſe who but appeared almoſt, if not altogether Chriſtians, ſtand confeſt the ſons of perdition; as far from life and ſalvation, (God be merciful unto them) as the depth of Hell from the height of Heaven.

9. For this reaſon the adverſary ſo rages, whenever *ſalvation by faith* is declared to the world. For this reaſon did he ſtir up earth and hell, to deſtroy thoſe who firſt preached it. And for the ſame reaſon, knowing that faith alone could overturn the foundations of his kingdom, did he call forth all his forces, and employ all his arts of lyes and calumny, to affright that glorious champion of the Lord of Hoſts, MARTIN LUTHER, from reviving it. Nor can we wonder thereat; for as that man of God obſerves, "How would it enrage a "proud ſtrong man arm'd, to be ſtopt and ſet at nought "by a little child coming againſt him with a reed in his "hand?" Eſpecially when he knew that little child would ſurely overthrow him and tread him under foot. *Even ſo, Lord Jeſus!* Thus hath thy ſtrength been ever *made perfect in weakneſs!* Go forth then, thou little child, that believeth in him, and *his right-hand ſhall ſhew thee terrible things!* Tho' thou art helpleſs and weak as an infant of days, the ſtrong man ſhall not be able to ſtand againſt thee. Thou ſhalt prevail over him, and ſubdue him, and overthrow him, and trample him under thy feet. Thou ſhalt march on under the great captain of thy ſalvation, *conquering and to conquer*, until all thine enemies are deſtroyed, and *death is ſwallowed up in victory.*

Now thanks be to God which giveth us the victory thro' our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, to whom with the Father and the Holy Ghoſt, be bleſſing, and glory, and wiſdom, and thankſgiving, and honour, and power, and might, for ever and ever. *Amen.*

F I N I S.